

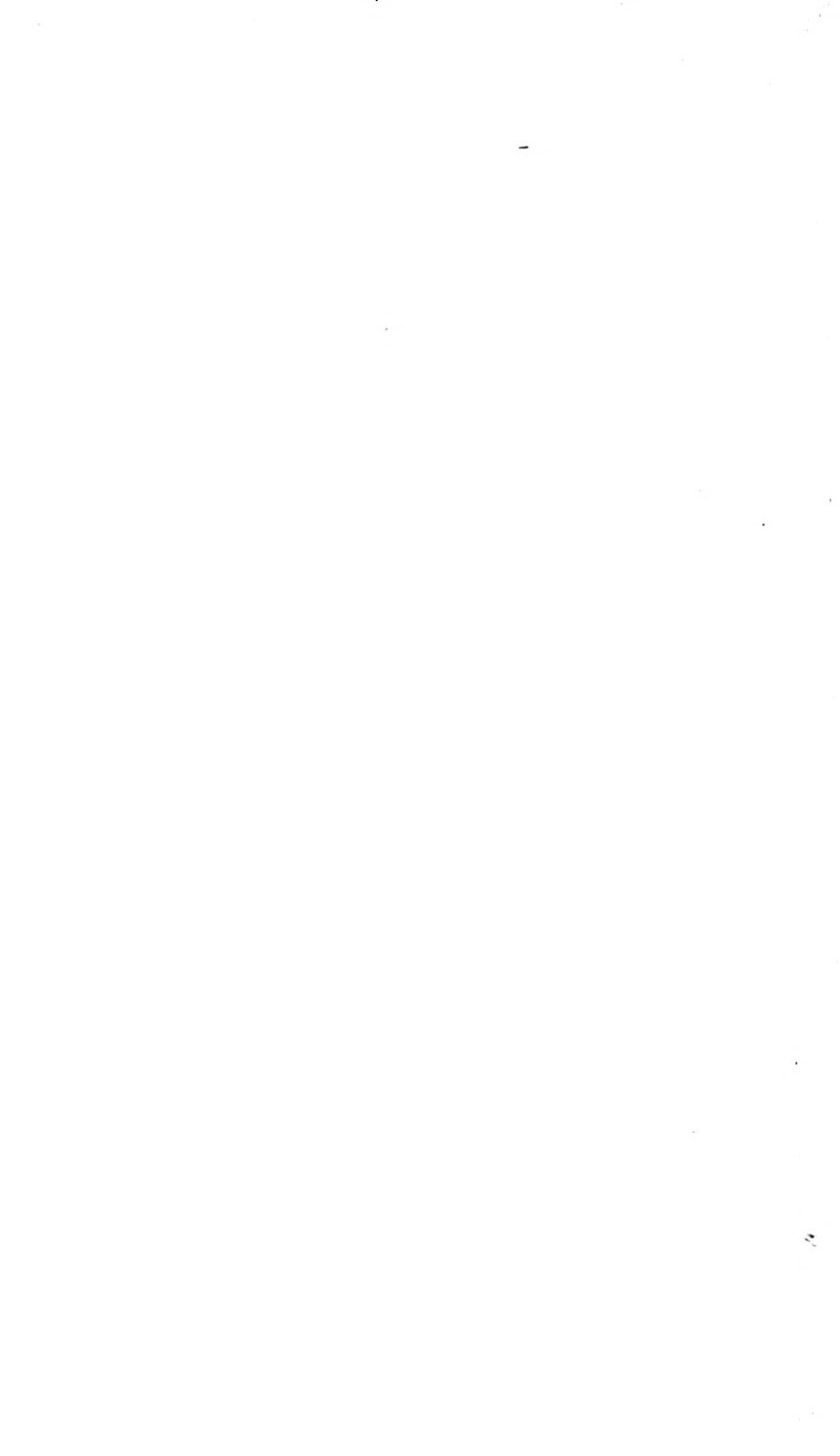
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# HISTORICAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN THE TOWN HALL,

AT AMHERST, JANUARY 19, 1874,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

# HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

## Dedication of the Congregational Meeting-House:

Being an historical sketch of the territory embraced in the first parish in  
Milford, an account of the origin of the parish, then a part  
of Amherst, the organization of the church,  
and the services of its ministers.

BY WILLIAM B. TOWNE, A. M.,

Member of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, corresponding  
member of the New York Historical Society, the Penn-  
sylvania Historical Society, and the state  
Historical Society of Wisconsin.

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CONCORD, N. H.:

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1874.

Historians rarely descend to those details from which alone the real state of a community can be collected.—*Macaulay*.

The present state of things is the consequence of the past; and it is natural to inquire as to the sources of the good we enjoy, or the evils we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent; if intrusted with the care of others, it is not just.—*Johnson*.

History maketh a young man to be old, without either wrinkles or gray hairs, privileging him with the experience of age, without either the infirmities or inconveniences thereof.—*Fuller*.

# ADDRESS.

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## OUR FATHERS—THEIR FAITH AND THEIR PRACTICE.

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After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity.\* Such was the polity of the early settlers. With a country poor, and the people few in number, we find a college† established, and

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\* New England's First Fruits, London, 1643. Mass. Hist. Coll. I, p. 242.

† In the autumn of 1636, only six years from the first settlement of the Massachusetts colony, the General Court voted £400, equal to a tax for one year upon the entire settlement, towards the erection of a public school or college, of which £200 was to be paid the next year, and £200 when the work was finished. In 1638 the Rev. John Harvard, a consumptive, who had been in the country a year or two, died, leaving £779 17s. 2d., one half of his estate, and his entire library, consisting of three hundred and twenty volumes, towards the erection of a college. In that day of small things this bequest was a large sum, and in March, 1639, it was ordered that the college should be called Harvard college, in honor of its benefactor. The first person who had charge of the institution was Nathaniel Eaton—a very unfortunate appointment. He was accused of ill-treating the students, of giving them bad and scanty diet, of exercising inhuman severities towards them, and of beating his usher, Nathaniel Briscoe, in a most barbarous manner. As a result, the court dismissed him from office, fined him one hundred marks (£66 13s. 4d.), and ordered him to pay £30 to Briscoe. He was then excommunicated by the church at Cambridge, soon after which he went to Virginia, from thence to England, where he became a violent persecutor of the Nonconformists, was at length committed to prison for debt, and there ended his days. But this misfortune neither checked the zeal nor dampened the ardor of the earnest men who had the work in charge.—*Pierce's History of Harvard University.*

a little later, an enactment "to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, every township, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read; and where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a Grammer school,—the masters thereof being able to instruct youth, so far as they may be fitted for the University.\* Here we have a distinct recognition of the idea of education for the whole people. In these measures, says the historian,† "especially in the laws establishing common schools, lies the secret of the success and character of New England. Every child, as it was born into the world, was lifted from the earth by the genius of the country, and in the statutes of the land received, as its birthright, a pledge of the public care of its morals and its mind."

Within thirty years of their settlement we find this people surveying land, and laying out farms in the valley of the Souhegan, regarding it as within their province. And such a conclusion was not strange. Gosnold, Pring, Weymouth,‡ and Smith,|| of Virginia fame,—an escaped Turkish slave, whose life seems to have belonged more to a mythical age than to that century,—with others of less celebrity in the mother country, had explored the coast, its bays and its rivers; but of the interior but little

\* Colonial Laws 74, 186.

† Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. I, p. 459.

‡ Weymouth entered the Penobscot or Kennebec river, and in a shallop, brought in pieces out of England, ascended not much less than three score miles, and kidnapped and carried away five of the natives. "One, standing before, carried our box of merchandise, as we were wont when I went to traffic with them, and a platter of pease, which meat they loved; but before we were landed, one of them, being so suspiciously fearful of his own good, withdrew himself into the wood. The other two met us on the shore side to receive the pease, with whom we went up the cliff to their fire, and sat down with them; and while we were discussing how to catch the third man that was gone, I opened the box and shew them trifles to exchange, thinking thereby to have banished fear from the other, and draw him to return. But when we could not we used little delay, but suddenly laid hands upon them, and it was as much as five or six of us could do to get them into the light horseman (boat); for they were strong, and so naked as our best hold was by their long hair on their heads."—Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. 28, p. 144-5.

|| Smith made a rude map of the coast, superior, perhaps, to any that had preceded it, and was the first to give the country the name of New England. He declared that "truth was more than wealth, and industrious subjects more available to a king than gold."

was known. The marvellous accounts of the explorers, and the religious condition of the country favored colonization; and between 1621 and 1631, including both years, there were not less than twenty charters granted for the purpose of settlement or commerce on the coast of New England.\* The grant of Capt. John Mason, in 1622, extended on the coast from where the waters of the Naumkeag discharge themselves into the ocean to the river Merrimack, extending inland to the sources of these streams. The same year Mason and Sir Ferdinando Gorges obtained a grant from the Merrimack to the Kennebec river, bounded by the ocean, and extending back to the great river of Canada. In 1628 Sir Henry Roswell and others received a grant, in width from three miles north of the Merrimack river to three miles south of the Charles, bounded on the Atlantic, and extending back to the western ocean; and it was under this grant that the Massachusetts settlers held their possessions.

The next year, 1629, John Mason received a grant extending "from the middle of Piscataqua river and up the same to the farthest head thereof, and from thence north-westward, until sixty miles from the mouth of the harbor were finished; also through Merrimack river to the farthest head thereof, and so forward up into the land westward until sixty miles were finished; and from thence to cross overland to the end of the sixty miles accounted from the Piscataqua river; together with all islands within five leagues of the coast."† Now it is obvious that grants so profuse and inconsistent could not all stand, and out of the two last mentioned grew the controversy between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, which lasted nearly a century, and was renowned for its acrimony and bitterness. A generation passed away, a new generation took it up, and thus it was carried along till terminated by royal authority. I have already stated that within thirty years of their arrival the inhabitants of the Massachusetts colony were surveying land and laying out farms in the valley of the Souhegan. Within the period mentioned, settlements had extended up to Groton and Chelmsford. From 1655 to 1665 the country was at peace with

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\* Palfrey's History of New England, vol. 1, pp. 397-8.

† Farmer's edition of Belknap, p. 8.

the aborigines, and the tide of population rolled onward rapidly. In addition to those on the Souhegan, grants were made on both sides of the Merrimack river, on the Nashua river, on Salmon brook, on Penichuck pond, on Penichuck brook, and in other localities, and, with their continuance, the grantees, and those who desired to settle on the farms granted, felt the need of the privileges and immunities of an incorporated township. In accordance therewith, in 1673, they petitioned the General Court and were incorporated, the township being named Dunstable,\* and deriving its name from Dunstable in England, some of the proprietors being from that place. It must have been something like fifteen miles from its eastern to its western boundary, and more than twelve miles from its northern to its southern, as it embraced the city of Nashua, the towns of Hudson, Hollis, Tyngsborough, all of Amherst that lies south of the Souhegan, all of Milford on the same side of that river, except a strip a mile in width on the west side of the town, contiguous to the towns of Wilton and Mason, all of Merrimack on the same side of the same river, most of the town of Litchfield, and portions of the towns of Londonderry, Pelham, Brookline, Pepperell, and Townsend. At this time the north-western corner of the county of Middlesex, Massachusetts, was on the south bank of the Souhegan river, a few rods below the bridge recently erected east of the Pine Valley Corporation, and the county maintained its jurisdiction till 1741, when the boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire was determined, severing Dunstable, and bringing about two thirds of the township

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\* The following year the plantation was surveyed and its boundaries were as follows: " It lieth upon both sides Merrimack river on the Nashua river. It is bounded on the south by Chelmsford, by Groton line, and partly by country land. The westerly line runs due north until you come to Souhegan river, to a hill called Dram-cup hill, to a great pine near to the said river at the north-west corner of Charlestown school farm, bounded by Souhegan river on the north; and on the east side of the Merrimack it begins at a great stone which was supposed to be near the north-east corner of Mr. Brenton's farm, and from thence it runs south-south-east six miles to a pine tree marked F, standing within sight of Beaver brook; thence it runs two degrees west of south four miles and a quarter, which reached to the south side of Henry Kimball's farm at Jeremie's hill; thence from the south-east angle of said farm it runs two degrees and a quarter westward of the south near to the head of the long pond which lieth at the head of Edward Colburn's farm. And thus it is bounded by the said pond and the head of said Colburn's farm, taking in Captain Scarlett's farm so as to close again; all of which is sufficiently bounded and described.—*Proprietor's Records*.



within the jurisdiction of New Hampshire. This was very distasteful to many; nevertheless, with the settlement of the province line there was an improved condition of things.

Confidence was strengthened, the tide of settlers moved onward, real property was in demand, and with the increase of population petitions were numerous for a division of the New Hampshire part of old Dunstable. Accordingly, in April, 1746, the legislature of New Hampshire divided it, incorporating the new town of Dunstable,\* also Hollis, Merrimack, and

### MONSON.

This last named town embraced within its limits most of the present populous part of Milford on the south side of the Souhegan river, all of Amherst on the same side of that river, and a portion of the north-west part of Hollis. Col. Joseph Blanchard† was authorized to call the first meeting of the inhabitants, which was held May 1, only thirty days after the date of the act of incorporation. At a subsequent meeting, held on the 27th of the same month, Col. Joseph Blanchard, James Wheeler, and Robert Colburn were chosen a committee "to make the bound between the town of Hollis and the town of Monson." At the same meeting it was also voted "that there be a pound created and built near to the house of William Nevins upon the most convenient piece of ground." The following petition from the inhabitants was presented to the general assembly of New Hampshire, under date of May 13, 1747. "The petition of the inhabitants of the town of Monson, hereto subscribers, humbly

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\* In 1837 the name was changed to Nashua. In 1842 the town was divided, and the north portion incorporated by the name of Nashville. In 1853 Nashville and Nashua were consolidated and chartered as the city of Nashua.

† Col. Joseph Blanchard was son of Capt. Joseph and Abiah (Hassell) Blanchard; was born at Dunstable Feb. 11, 1704; married Rebecca Hubbard; was an accomplished land surveyor, and for several years was agent of the Masonian proprietors; was in 1740, by mandamus, appointed one of the councillors of New Hampshire, which position he sustained till his death; commanded a regiment in the French war, and was in 1755 stationed at Fort Edward, Washington county, New York, one company of his command being the famous Rogers rangers; was also judge of the superior court from 1749 to 1758. He died April 7, 1758, and his widow April 17, 1774. They had thirteen children, among whom was Augustus Blanchard, Esq., who died in Milford in 1809, having been clerk of the south-west parish ten years, town clerk for the first ten years after the town was incorporated, and a representative of the town to the general court.

sheweth, that the said town is lately begun to settle, and but about fifteen families there; that they are one of the frontier towns west of Merrimack river, and the most northerly one already incorporated lying between Hollis and the new plantation called Souhegan West; that could we be assisted by soldiers, such competent number as might enable us to defend ourselves, shall cheerfully endeavor to stay there, by which we shall serve as a barrier in part to Hollis, Merrimack, and Dunstable; that the last year we were favored by soldiers from Massachusetts\* that prevented our drawing off; that should the war be pursued by the enemy as vigorously as last year (unless we are favored by some assistance from the government), we humbly apprehend it would be too great presumption to venture ourselves and families there; that it will be very ruinous to your petitioners to leave their settlements and the frontier widened, and for a necessary defence will require a greater number of soldiers than to assist us there. Wherefore your petitioners pray that a guard for two garrisons and a small scout on our front may be granted to us. James Wheeler, William Nevens, William Colburn, Robert Colburn, Jonathan Taylor, Samuel Leman, Samuel Leman, jr., Abraham Leman, Thomas Nevens, Benjamin Hopkins, Isaac Farwell, Stephen Haselton, John Burns, Thomas Murdow."

Upon the foregoing petition, and a similar one from Souhegan West, the assembly gave orders for enlisting or impressing fifteen good effective men, under proper officers, to scout and guard Souhegan West and Monson till the twenty-third day of October next if need be, and that said men be shifted once a month.

In 1748, Dunstable, Merrimack, Hollis, Nottingham, and Monson united in the choice of a representative to the general assembly, the session to be holden at Portsmouth on the third day of the next January. The town this year voted to raise £60 old tenor for the use of highways, "one half to be done in June, at twenty shillings per day for a man and eight shillings per day

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\*It seems from the tenor of this petition that Massachusetts granted military aid to this infant settlement five years after it had been adjudged within the jurisdiction of New Hampshire.

for a pair of oxen ; the other half to be done in September, at fifteen shillings per day for a man, and the same price as in June for a pair of oxen."

In 1749 the annual meeting was at the house of Mr. Thomas Nevins. The fifth article in the warrant was "to see if the town will agree to tax the lands within the whole township for the use of preaching." At the meeting the town voted to dismiss this article. At the same meeting a road two rods wide was laid out from opposite Souhegan bridge, commonly called Lyon's bridge,\* up the river through the farms of Madam Tailer, Col. Joseph Blanchard, Benjamin Hopkins, and others.†

1750. At the annual meeting this year, Benjamin Hopkins, Robert Colburn, and Nathan Hutchinson were chosen a committee to adjust the boundary line between Monson and Hollis, and the town again declined to tax the lands within the whole township for the support of preaching.

1751. "Voted that the road from Nathan Hutchinson's land to Mr. Hopkins' house be discontinued, or shut up for a time, without the inhabitants please to put up good gates or good handy bars."

1753. At the annual meeting this year the second article in the warrant was "to see if the town would raise a sum of money for a school ; the third, to see if it would tax the lands for building a meeting-house ; and the fourth, to raise money for the support of highways,"—all of which articles were decided in the negative. The boundary line between the town and Hollis seems not to have been settled, as at this meeting the matter was referred to the selectmen.

The following petition, in substance, was presented to the general assembly of New Hampshire by the selectmen:—"Whereas, the inhabitants of Monson have received a late order to render into the office of the secretary of state an invoice of their polls and estates in order for apportioning the

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\*In the early settlement of the country the bridge over the river near the Amherst railroad station was called Lyon's bridge, and derived its name from Ebenezer Lyon, who lived near it as early as 1748, and who died in 1798, aged 88 years.

† Widow Abigail Tailer, of Boston, at this time owned a farm of 300 acres in the neighborhood of the East Milford railroad flag station, Col. Joseph Blanchard another between that and where the present village in Milford is now located, and Benjamin Hopkins owned the Charlestown school farm.

taxes, which we have done, and would further beg leave to remonstrate our infancy and inability to bear any part of the public burden at present; that there is but thirty-six polls in the whole, several of them being transiently hired to labor for a short space of time; that there are but twenty-one houses, chiefly small cottages, only for a present shelter, the charge of building yet to come; that the householders are all plain men, dwelling in tents, husbanding their employments, their improvements very small, their lands unsubdued, their progress much retarded by their necessity to work out of town during the prime of the year, or at other business to procure provisions, and, though the town is a part of old Dunstable, it has till now been a portion and remained a total wilderness; that till within a few years the owners were under no obligation to settle the lands that were very recently granted to gentlemen in farms, by which means the few settlers are scattered all about the town, and that much labor has and must be spent in opening and making roads, bridges, &c., that are of present necessity a burden too heavy for the small, weak number that is there; that in the late war they were at the expense of garrisoning, scouting, and defending themselves, besides many other charges they must have and must go through; so therefore apprehend themselves utterly unable to bear any part of the public taxes as yet; but hope their small beginning in time may become useful, if they may be nursed and favored now in their infancy. Wherefore your petitioners pray that they may be considered in their infant and chargeable state, and that they may not be taxed till they are of ability to go through their own necessary charge, and when that shall be, they will cheerfully contribute according to their power."

1754. This year John Shepard,\* William Peabody, Andrew Bradford, Israel Towne, Archelaus Williams, Richard Gould, Thomas Williams, John Hutchinson, John Edmonds, and others,

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\* John Shepard then resided within the present limits of the village in Milford, on the north side of Souhegan river, where Mr. John Marvell now lives; William Peabody on the old Peabody farm, farther up the river on the same side, late the property of the late T. T. Farnsworth and Israel Towne, within the present limits of Amherst, on the farm owned by Abel and Frank W. Chase. The prayer of the petitioners would have annexed to Monson a strip of territory about seven miles in length by two in width, and would have included nearly the whole of Amherst plain.

petitioned the governor and council to be annexed to Monson. They represented themselves substantially as inhabitants of a tract of land north of and adjoining Monson, lying within no incorporation, town, or district; that the town of Monson is situated in length, east and west, near eight miles, in breadth but about four miles, and is bounded on the northerly side by Souhegan river, both sides of which river are generally fruitful and profitable land for corn and grass; that if the town of Monson were enlarged on the north so as to add and include the following tract of land—beginning at the north-east corner of Monson, on Souhegan river, and running north by the line of Merrimack two miles, then begin the west station at the north-west corner of Monson and run thence north two miles, then in a straight line to the end of the two miles first mentioned—which would be an addition of about seven thousand acres, and would make the town about five and one half miles in width generally; that the said river is small; that many bridges are now and must continue to be kept in repair, so that the river is no inconvenience to this union; that it will be for the accommodation of Monson, and that several of the petitioners have for many years been settled here, and have made their improvements at heavy expense; that they have not had the benefit of any incorporation in any town, nor do they see any present prospect of incorporation unless they are annexed to Monson.

1755. At the annual meeting this year the question of taxing the land for building a meeting-house was again agitated, and again decided in the negative.

1756. At this annual meeting the question was again raised, and again decided in the negative, and an effort to raise a sum of money for a school part of the year was also decided in the negative. Before the close of the year, however, a special meeting was called to fix upon a place for locating the meeting-house, and it was decided to set it in the most convenient place, near the centre of the town.\*

1758. The annual meeting this year was held at the house of Archelaus Towne, innholder. The third article in the warrant

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\* Tradition points to a locality on the northerly slope of Duncklee hill as the place fixed upon, and it still retains the name of "the meeting-house lot."

was "to see if the town will vote to tax the lands of residents and non-residents for building a meeting-house," which question at the meeting was decided in the negative. The fifth article in said warrant was "to see if the town will come into any agreement with Capt. Shepard concerning the one half of his bridge, or allow him some satisfaction for the same." On this article it was voted to allow Capt. Shepard some satisfaction for one half of his bridge, and James Wheeler, Benjamin Herriek, and Nathan Hutchinson were chosen a committee to adjust the matter. At a subsequent meeting this year it was voted to raise £250 old tenor for the use of highways, £70 to pay Capt. Shepard for one half of his bridge over the river at his mill, and £16 to William Jones for plank put on said bridge. The £250 for highways was never raised, the inhabitants at a later meeting reconsidering the vote.

1759. The town again voted not to tax the lands for building a meeting-house. Chose William Jones and Josiah Crosby to inspect the deer.

1760. Voted to petition the governor and council of the province to set off or annex the land on the south side of Monson to Hollis, and to annex such part of Souhegan West to the remainder of Monson as will be sufficient to maintain the gospel, and other charges incident to towns.

1761. Voted to raise £100 old tenor to defray town charges; declined to tax the lands for building a meeting-house; voted to grant the petition of Hollis that a mile and one half, or thereabouts, be set off agreeable to the petition of said Hollis; and dismissed the article relative to fixing a place to locate the meeting-house.

1763. Benjamin Hopkins, John Burns, Joseph Gould, John Burns, jr., Thomas Burns, and George Burns, at the annual meeting, protested against a division of the town. The voters, however, sustained their former position; also, voted to raise £300 old tenor for the support of preaching, each person to pay their money where they hear.

1764. Voted to sink the £300 old tenor raised last March for the support of preaching. The fourth article in the warrant this year was "to see if the town would agree to build a meet-

ing-house, and fix upon a place to set it," which article was decided in the negative. The fifth was "to see if the town would raise a sum of money to hire preaching," which was also decided in the negative. The sixth was "to see if the town would raise a sum of money in order to make satisfaction to the towns of Hollis and Amherst for the privilege of worshipping with them." For this purpose it was voted to raise £400 old tenor. The seventh article was "to see if the town would provide one or more burial-places in the town," which article was dismissed. The tenth article was "to see if the town would be at the charge of making another road where Mr. Benjamin Hopkins has flowed the town road, or take a course of law with him for damages." Upon this article the town voted to take a course of law, and appointed the selectmen to prosecute the suit. On the 12th of September this year another town meeting was held, at which it was voted to build a meeting-house, to petition the general court for a tax upon the lands of residents and non-residents for building the same, and Benjamin Hopkins, Nathan Hutchinson, and Josiah Crosby were chosen a committee to carry the matter to the general court.

1765. At the annual meeting this year the fourth article in the warrant was "to see if the town will vote to tax the lands of residents and non-residents to build a meeting-house and settle a minister, and if not, to nullify and make void the former vote for that purpose." The proposition to erect a meeting-house and settle a minister was not sustained. The town this year voted to raise £250 old tenor to defray town charges.

1767. The town voted this year that the money raised in the year 1764, and assessed for the towns of Hollis and Amherst, should not be collected.

1769. The town declined to raise money for the support of highways.

1770. On the ninth day of April a special meeting was called, when it was voted that the town be divided between Hollis and Amherst, both of these towns having assented to the arrangement. The division was as follows, viz.: Beginning at the north-east corner of Monson, and running south by the line of Merrimack two miles, then due west to the west line of Monson,

then north to Souhegan river, then down said river to the bound first mentioned to be annexed to Amherst, the remainder to Hollis. By this arrangement Amherst acquired its first territory on the south side of the Souhegan river. The reason assigned for a division in the petition of Monson\* to the governor and council was, "that the land in and about the centre of said Monson is so very poor, barren, broken, and uneven, as cannot admit of many settlers, so that those families that are in town are almost all planted in the extreme parts of it. We therefore conceive that if a division were made, as above mentioned, the interest and good of the people in it would be much promoted thereby, especially as we have no prospect of ever building a meeting-house, in the centre or elsewhere, any way, to accommodate us, by which difficulty we think the gospel will not be settled amongst us while in the present situation." Thus was Monson blotted out, after an existence of twenty-four years. For the last twelve years of her continuance, her annual

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<sup>4</sup> TOWN CLERKS AND SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF MONSON.

<i>Town Clerk.</i>	<i>First Selectman.</i>	<i>Second Selectman.</i>	<i>Third Selectman.</i>
1746. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	William Nevins.
1747. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	William Nevins.
1748. Robert Colburn,	Robert Colburn,	Benj. Hopkins,	Samuel Leman.
1749. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	Samuel Leman.
1750. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	Nathan Hutchinson.
1751. Robert Colburn,	Robert Colburn,	William Nevins,	Nathan Hutchinson.
1752. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	William Nevins.
1753. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Farley.
1754. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Hopkins,	Robert Nevins,	William Nevins.
1755. Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Kenrick,	Robert Colburn,	William Nevins.
1756. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	John Brown,	William Jones.
1757. Robert Colburn,	Robert Colburn,	Benjamin Kenrick,	John Brown.
1758. Robert Colburn,	Robert Colburn,	John Brown,	William Nevins.
1759. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	Jonathan Taylor,	Thomas Nevins.
1760. Benjamin Kenrick,	Robert Colburn,	Benj. Hopkins,	Benjamin Kenrick.
1761. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	William Nevins,	Nathan Hutchinson.
1762. Benjamin Kenrick,	Nathan Hutchinson,	William Nevins,	Robert Colburn.
1763. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	Daniel Kenrick,	Josiah Crosby.
1764. Robert Colburn,	Robert Colburn,	Nat'n Hutchinson,	William Nevins.
1765. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Hopkins,	William Nevins,	Benjamin Kenrick.
1766. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	William Nevins,	Nathan Hutchinson.
1767. Archelaus Towne,	Archelaus Towne,	Robert Colburn,	Josiah Crosby.
1768. Archelaus Towne,	Archelaus Towne,	Josiah Crosby,	Daniel Kenrick.
1769. Archelaus Towne,	Archelaus Towne,	Joseph Gould,	Thomas Burns.
1770. Benjamin Kenrick,	Benjamin Kenrick,	William Nevins,	Josiah Crosby.



meetings were held at the house of Archelaus Towne,\* innholder.

She had no public structure except a pound. She resolutely refused to raise money for the support of schools, and while she occasionally, at a special meeting, voted in favor of the first steps towards public religious instruction, at her annual meetings she invariably negatived such vote. A century has passed since her demise, and but for the recent finding† of a portion of her records, but few persons of to-day would know that she ever existed.

1771. The harmony that prevailed last year, when annexation was so popular, was not of long continuance, for in January of this year about thirty of the most prominent of those that were last year annexed petitioned the governor and council for a division of Amherst. They recite in their petition,—“That the town of Amherst is about nine miles in length, by reason that about half the town of Monson was of late annexed to it, and is capable of being divided into two towns or parishes without prejudice to or spoiling the same; that many of us live in that part of Amherst which was lately Monson, and our being annexed to said Amherst was contrary to our desire and interest; that we are so remote from the centre of Amherst that it is, and ever will be, with great expense, inconvenience, and difficulty to us and our families to attend public worship, by reason of the distance; that many of our estates are not so valuable by reason of our being annexed to Amherst, for before that our

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\*Archelaus Towne, son of Israel and Grace (Gardner) Towne, was born at Topsfield, Mass., in 1734; came to Souhegan West with his father at the age of about six years; married Martha, born July 24, 1737, daughter of Ephraim Abbott. They resided in Monson, at what is now known as Danforth's Corner, in Amherst, where he kept a tavern for several years. They had seven children. His wife died in 1773, after which he raised a company, took command of it, joined the continental army, and died at Fishkill, N. Y., in November, 1779. He was a man large of stature, of great physical strength and power of endurance, fond of the hardship and excitement of frontier life, a natural leader, and one that commanded the confidence of his associates.—Narrative of Jonathan Towne, who died at Milford Dec. 31, 1842, in the 89th year of his age.

†The Hon. Samuel T. Worcester, of Nashua, being engaged in the preparation of an article upon the early history of Hollis, was informed by his brother, the Hon. John N. Worcester, of Hollis, that there formerly existed, in the town clerk's office of that town, records relating to Monson. This led the former to procure the nearly worn out volume, have what remained of it bound, and put in condition to prevent further immediate waste.

situation was nigh the centre of Monson, and on that account purchased our lands at a dear rate, and Monson being annihilated, our situation is more inconvenient than before."

Amherst followed with a counter petition, in which it was stated,—<sup>36</sup>"That for more than twenty years last past a number of persons living on those lands lately known by the name of Monson, but more lately joined to Amherst, not having a minister settled among them nor accommodation sufficient for that purpose, as they said, very constantly attended the worship of God with us in said Amherst, not doing anything with us towards our meeting-house, nor towards the support of our minister, except some small private donations made to our minister. However, they repeatedly requested our town to consent to receive them, promising to meet at any place that the major part of the people should fix to build a house on, whereupon our town, after repeated solicitations to receive them, gave their consent. And your excellency and honors, some time in July last, saw fit to aggregate about one half of said Monson to said Amherst. Soon after, our town saw it necessary to build a meeting-house, and voted to do it, our present meeting-house being small and insufficient for the old town and said new addition. The most of the people of the new addition were present, and some voted in the affirmative, some in the negative; but they began to think that the charter subjected them to the same duties with us of the old town, that they must defray some part of the charges of building and so forth, and not only so, but must do something towards supporting our minister. These reflections affected some of them very sensibly. They had not been acquainted with anything of the kind. They were ready to construe it as a degree of persecution and the like. And to remedy this evil they are about petitioning to have our town, as it now lies, divided into two parishes, which we think can not be done without a manifest injury to more than three quarters of the town. A very considerable quantity of land in our town is barren and poor, and will not admit of two parishes; besides, it lies in such a situation by reason of a river and hills, that the whole of the people may more conveniently meet at one place, the place pitched upon, than at any two places in the town."

No action was taken by the state authorities upon either of these petitions, and quiet seems to have been restored. The new meeting-house was built and dedicated, the worshippers gathered in this new sanctuary from all parts of the town, and the continuous exercises of yesterday and to-day, after the lapse of a century, are a fitting recognition of that event.

### THE SOUTH-WEST PARISH.

In the year 1782 forty-seven persons, as follows, viz.,

Nathan Hutchinson,	William Wallace,
Andrew Bradford,	Ebenezer Averill,
Josiah Crosby,	Moses Averill,
Sampson Crosby,	Joshua Burnham,
James Gilman,	Stephen Burnham,
Thomas Burns,	Jonathan Hutchinson,
Isaac Abbott,	Abner Hutchinson,
Elisha Hutchinson,	William Peabody,
Benjamin Hutchinson,	Elijah Averill,
Josiah Crosby, Jr.,	Ebenezer Hopkins,
John Wallace,	Jonathan Grimes,
Stephen Crosby,	George Burns,
Augustus Blanchard,	William Grimes,
John Burns,	Darius Abbott,
William Crosby,	Samuel How,
John Bradford,	Jonathan Towne,
Thaddeus Grimes,	Henry Codman,
Israel Burnham,	William Melendy,
John Grimes,	Samuel Dodge,
Nathan Hutchinson, Jr.,	Bartholomew Towne,
Bartholomew Hutchinson,	Benjamin Hopkins, Jr.,
David Burnham,	Benjamin Conant,
Arthur Graham,	Benjamin Hopkins, 3d,
Samuel Graham,	

were constituted the third or south-west parish in Amherst, "for transacting ministerial affairs only." The reason assigned by the incorporators for the formation of this parish was, that their local situation rendered it impracticable for some of them and many of their children to give a general attendance at the

stated place of public worship, and, further, that they conceived they could well be spared, there being about three hundred ratable polls taxed to the first parish. There was no boundary to the new parish, neither were the members exempt from former obligations, one condition being, that nothing in its organization should be construed to exempt any of said parishioners, their polls or estates, from paying their just proportion of all ministerial charges already arisen in said town of Amherst, nor from the future support, according to contract, of the Rev. Daniel Wilkins, the late minister of said town then living.\* The date of incorporation was November 23, and the first meeting was held at the house of Thaddeus Grimes, on the fourteenth day of the next January. At this meeting Capt. Nathan Hutchinson† was chosen moderator; Augustus Blanchard, clerk and treasurer; Augustus Blanchard, Lieut. Thomas Burns, and Capt. John Bradford, assessors; and Benjamin Hutchinson, collector;—and it was “voted to build a meeting-house of the same size and bigness the north-west parish hath built, except the porches,” and that Lieut. Darius Abbott, Capt. Josiah Crosby, and Capt. Andrew Bradford be a committee to provide timber, boards, and shingles, and let the same out at public vendue to the lowest bidder.” At the first annual meeting of the parish, holden at the house of Thaddeus Grimes, innholder, on the fourth day of March, 1783, it was voted to raise £32 4s. to discharge the expense of the parish being set off, £95 to be laid out in purchasing timber, boards, shingles, and other materials for building the meeting-house, £15 to pay for preaching the current year, and that Capt. Nathan Hutchinson, Lieut. Thomas Burns, and Capt. John Bradford be a committee to hire preaching. Later in the same year another meeting was called to

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\*The Rev. Daniel Wilkins at this time was aged and infirm, had been settled upwards of forty years, and lived only three months after the formation of this parish, dying February 11, 1783, in the seventy-third year of his age.

† Capt. Nathan Hutchinson, a very active and efficient man in town and parish affairs, was son of Benjamin and Sarah (Tarbell) Hutchinson, of Bedford, Middlesex county, Mass., and married Rachel Stearns. In 1744 he purchased of Benjamin Hopkins one hundred acres of land, near the centre of the Charlestown school farm,—bounded north by the river, south by the south line of said farm, of equal width at each end, also bounded by a black oak on Saddle hill. He came here from Billerica in June, 1748, located on Elm street, where E. D. Searles now resides, and died June 12, 1795, aged 78 years. His widow died on the 25th of July, in the same year, aged 76 years.

make choice of a place where the meeting-house should be erected, and make provision for clearing the same. After adjourning from the house of Mr. Grimes to the place regarded as the most desirable location, it was voted that the house should stand about twenty rods south of Shepard's bridge, on a rise of ground. This vote would have located the meeting-house on what are now the premises of Doctor S. S. Stickney. At a meeting held still later this year, Capt. Nathan Hutchinson, John Wallace, and John Burns were chosen a committee to procure stone for underpinning the meeting-house, and Joshua Burnham was authorized to purchase a "parish book."

At the annual meeting, holden March 2, 1784, it was voted to proceed with the meeting-house, and to begin to frame it the first Monday in June, and raise it as soon as possible. Capt. Nathan Hutchinson, Capt. Josiah Crosby, and Capt. Andrew Bradford were chosen a committee to see that the meeting-house is framed, underpinned, and raised. It was also voted to raise £30 towards the expense of the meeting-house—£20 to pay for preaching; that three shillings per day be allowed each man for work on the meeting-house,—the laborer to board himself; and that any person who shall hereafter join the parish, shall be exempt from any tax raised, to raise, board, and shingle the meeting-house. For some reason, not discernible at this time, the location that had been fixed upon did not prove satisfactory, for, at a special meeting held on the 15th day of June, it was decided that it should be located about ten rods north-west from the former place, between two pitch pine stumps; that Augustus Blanchard, Lieut. Thomas Burns, Joshua Burnham, Capt. John Bradford, and Lieut. Benjamin Hutchinson, be a committee to carry on the work, and that said committee provide one barrel of rum, two barrels of cider, and one quarter of sugar for the raising. Thus, it would seem that the meeting-house was raised in the summer of 1784, for, on the second day of September of this year, a special meeting was called, and the second article in the warrant was to see if the parishioners would board, shingle, or finish any part of the meeting-house frame,—when it was voted to board and shingle it; that it be boarded with square edged boards, and that the boarding and shingling be let to the lowest bidder at vendue. At the same meeting, it was voted to raise

£40 to defray the expense of furthur finishing the meeting-house; and Lieut. Thomas Burns and Lieut. Darius Abbott were chosen a committee to wait upon Governor Hopkins, and get the donation he hath offered to procure the nails. It was common among our ancestors in England, and continues to the present time, of denominating the chief man, or the man at the head of prominent movements or establishments, as the governor;\* and the title, in this case, must have been derived in this way. In 1659, the general court of Massachusetts granted to the town of Charlestown 1,000 acres of land, from the unappropriated lands of the province, for the support of a school. The next year it was surveyed by that celebrated land surveyor, Jonathan Danforth, of Billerica, and described thus:—"Laid out, for the use of the school of Charlestown, one thousand acres of land, more or less in the wilderness, on the western side of Merrimack river, at a place commonly called by the Indians, Sowheaganucke, beginning at the foot of a great hill, and so extending eastward about two miles down said river, and bounded by the river on the north, and by land laid out for Mrs. Anna Cole on the east, the wilderness elsewhere surrounding according to marked trees, all of which are sufficiently bounded with C, and is more fully demonstrated by a platt taken of the same."† The title of Indians was extinguished by deed, dated July 14, 1671.‡ The north-west corner of this tract of land was on the south bank of the river, a few rods below the new bridge at Jones's crossing, and was identical with the north-west corner of Old Dunstable, the north-west corner of Middlesex county, Massachusetts, for more than sixty years, and the north-west corner of the late town of Monson. This tract extended down the river to the present east line of the farm of William Ramsdell, and no more attractive piece of land of the same magnitude exists in this region. The town of Charlestown continued to own it till May, 1743, when it was purchased by Benjamin Hopkins, of Billerica, for £375, and as early as 1745 he resided on it. A saw-mill is a necessity in a new settlement, and he early built

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\* The translators of the Bible observed it, in James 3:4.

† Mass. General Court Records.

‡ Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.

one upon Whitehall brook, a little west of where the house of Moses Proctor now stands; and, if any one will proceed into the field, about fifty rods northerly of the house of Luke Smith, to a little point of land on the border of the brook, overlooking the river and the intervale, and remove the turf, he will occasionally find in the soil a small piece of brick or stone that has once been in a chimney, a wall, or a fire-place, indicating that a dwelling once stood there. It was on this spot in the wilderness, with nothing to guide him but marked trees, that Mr. Hopkins erected his bullet-proof dwelling—a kind of fort, built of timber, to protect himself and family from the fierce beasts of the forest, and fiercer men. On the north side of the river lived William Peabody, John Shepard, and Israel Towne; on the south side his nearest neighbor was in the west parish of Dunstable, now Hollis; and his oldest son married Anna Powers, the first white child born in that town.\* Such is a brief outline of one who had, by universal consent, acquired the title of Governor,† and who, after a residence of upwards of forty years in the neighborhood, was making a donation to purchase the nails for the new meeting-house. At a subsequent meeting, in November, it was voted to provide clapboards, door-steps, boards for the lower floor, sashes, suitable stuff for window-frames, and glass, and that Capt. Nathan Hutchinson, Capt. William Peabody, and Capt. Josiah Crosby be a committee to provide the materials voted, and see that they are delivered at the meeting-house.

At the annual meeting holden on the 1st day of March, 1785, it was voted to raise £50 to be laid out on the meeting-house, and to raise £30 to hire preaching and defray parish charges. On the 7th day of the same month there was a special meeting called, and the second article in the warrant was to see if the parishioners will build porches to the meeting-house, or let any person or persons build the same for the ground the same may save in the house. At this meeting it was voted to build porches, and a committee was chosen for that purpose,

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\* Narrative of the venerable John Hopkins in 1840.

† He died June 11, 1787, aged 85 years; and his widow died July 30, 1792, aged 93 years.

and instructed to have the work done as soon as the other outside work on the house was completed. At the same meeting William Peabody, Benjamin Hopkins, and Joshua Burnham were chosen a committee to hire preaching the current year. At another special meeting, held on the 25th of April, Nathan Hutchinson, Augustus Blanchard, and Thomas Burns were chosen a committee to sell the pew-ground in the meeting-house, at public vendue, to the highest bidder, and give proper conveyances to the purchasers, and that the money arising from the sale be laid out in further finishing the meeting-house. It was also voted to put in all the joist and braces in the meeting-house not already in, and that John Burns be allowed 23 shillings lawful money for doing the same.

A still further special meeting was held on the 5th of September, when it was voted to lay the lower floor, and to let the same out at vendue to the lowest bidder, and it was struck off to Thomas Boynton at thirty-nine shillings. Thomas Burns, Nathan Hutchinson, and John Wallace were chosen a committee to procure proper floor nails, see that the sills were properly underpinned, and the floors laid in a good workmanlike manner. On the 25th day of December, another special meeting was held, when it was decided to have the sashes, window-frames, doors, body seats, and stuff for the body seats, put up at vendue, to be bid off by the lowest bidder. Nathan Hutchinson, Caleb Jones, and Josiah Crosby were chosen a committee to vendue the work off, to procure at the expense of the parish all the necessary materials for doing the work, and to see that it was done in a good workmanlike manner,—the work to be completed by the first day of next June. The sashes were bid off by Thomas Boynton, at 15s. 2d. old tenor; the window frames, by David Chandler at 8s. 11d.; front door, by Benjamin Conant at 20s.; the body seats and stuff for the same, by Nathan Hutchinson.

A warrant was issued for an annual meeting to be held on the 7th day of March, 1786; the fourth article therein being to see if the parishioners would finish the outside of the meeting-house or any part thereof; and the fifth was to see if they would have the £40, voted at the last annual meeting to be laid out on the



meeting-house, assessed and collected; but the records contain no reference to this meeting. There was, however, a special meeting held on the fourth of September in this year, when it was voted to accept the plan of Temple meeting-house porches and build in the same form, and also voted to procure glass and glazing materials for the meeting-house. At the annual meeting in March, 1787, there was no allusion to the meeting-house, but £30 was voted for the support of preaching. At a meeting in September of this year, a committee was chosen to get the glass set, and the sashes put in the window-frames, and £10 was voted to set the front-door steps, clear round the meeting-house, and level the ground before said house.

The year 1788 was an eventful one in parish affairs. William Crosby gave the parish the following described pieces of land, viz.: "Beginning at the south-west corner of Shepard's bridge, thence running southerly on the west side of the road leading from said bridge to my house,\* until it comes to the main road that leads from my house to Wilton, to a stake and stones; from thence westerly on the north side of said road about eight rods to a white oak stump; thence northerly to a black oak tree marked, standing on the bank of Souhegan river; from thence by said river to the place of beginning, being the land the meeting-house stands on. Also, one other piece, to be appropriated for a burying-ground, on the west part of my farm, bounded as follows, viz.: Beginning at a large white pine tree standing on the bank of the river a few rods north of the ditch bridge (so called); from thence east thirteen rods to a stake and stones; from thence south twelve rods to a stake and stones; from thence west until it comes to the river; and from thence by the river to the bound first mentioned, containing about one acre." These were parts of a tract of land of 500 acres granted in October, 1659, by the General Court of Massachusetts to Mrs. Anna Cole. The record reads thus: "In consideration of the liberal gifts to the country in the will of

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\* The first house erected on Union square—was raised in 1783, was occupied early in the present century by Dr. Robert Fuller, was known for many years as the old Fuller house, stood where the town hall now stands, and was removed to make room for that structure.

Capt. Robert Keayne,\* the whole court met together and voted," &c. At the date of the grant she was the widow of Capt. Keayne, but the next year became the wife of Samuel Cole. This tract was bounded on the north by the river 350 rods, and extended from the west line of the present farm of Matthias F. Crosby on Elm street down the river, near to the steam-mill of David Heald. In 1780, Josiah Crosby, in consideration of three hundred bushels of grain, two thirds Indian corn and one third rye, purchased 113 acres in the north-east corner of this tract, extending on the river from near the steam-mill, before mentioned, up a little above the west corner of the old cemetery. In 1782 he sold the same to his son William, and in the first of these conveyances it is referred to as part of the tract belonging to Mather Byles.†

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\* Robert Keayne, merchant of London, came over in the ship *Defence* in 1635, aged 40 years, with his wife Ann, aged 33 years, and son Benjamin, aged 16 years. He is characterized by Winthrop as "a man of eminent parts, an ancient professor of the gospel, coming over for its advancement and for conscience' sake, as wealthy, given to hospitality, very useful to the country, and a large contributor to its free schools." He was one of the founders and the first captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, was four times a representative of the town of Boston, and once speaker of the House of Deputies. Notwithstanding his virtues and usefulness, he became obnoxious on account of selling dearer than the law allowed, for which offence, after solemn trial, he was convicted and fined £250. His will occupies 148 folio pages of the probate records of Suffolk county, Massachusetts, in which he vindicates his character with a pathos indicative of a keen sense of the injustice to which he had been subjected, adding "that though he had suffered enough from the public to tie up both his hands, yet being desirous to requite evil with good, and though he cannot forget, being willing to forgive, and deeming it a want of gratitude to God for prosperous men to leave all to wife, children, or relatives, and nothing to the public or to charity," he proceeds to give £1200 to objects of public use or private charity, included in which were £250 to Harvard college.

† Mather Byles was born in Boston, March 26, 1706, and on his mother's side was descended from Richard Mather and John Cotton; was graduated at Harvard University, in 1725, and ordained the first pastor of Hollis Street church in 1733. His first wife was a niece of Governor Belcher, the second a daughter of Lieutenant-Governor Tailer, and it is probable this land came to him by inheritance. He continued his pastorate till 1776, when, on account of disloyalty, the connection was dissolved and never renewed. The next year he was denounced in town meeting, subsequently tried, found guilty of attachment to the royal cause, sentenced to confinement, and with his family to be sent to England. This sentence was never enforced, and he died in Boston, July 5, 1788, having received the degree of D. D. from Aberdeen University in 1765.

He was distinguished among his contemporaries for his wit, his solid learning, and his excellent literary taste. Pope, Lansdowne, and Watts were his correspondents, and many of his witticisms have come down to us. On one occasion, when required to remain in his house under guard, he persuaded the sentinel to go on an errand for

The month following the gift of the land, the parish voted "to ceil round the meeting-house as high as the windows; to case, make, and hang the end-doors, lay the platforms for the pews on the lower floor, and case the lower windows;" and the south-west corner, from the front to the west door, including the west door, ceiling, casing, and laying the platforms, was let to Joshua Burnham for 39s.; the south-east corner, from the front door to the east door, including the east door, the ceiling, casing, and laying the platforms, was let to Josiah Crosby for 41s.; from the east door to the west door round the north side, the ceiling, casing, and laying the platforms was let to John Wallace for 51s.; the platforms for the pews in the inside square was let to Jotham Shepard for 19s., the work being let by vendue to the lowest bidder, the boards and nails for all the work and the hinges for the doors to be found by the parish. At a special meeting called in September, the parish further voted to finish the whole meeting-house; and Augustus Blanchard, Thomas Burns, and Josiah Crosby were chosen a committee of the pew-ground in the galleries, and lay the same before the parish on the 29th inst., to which time the meeting was adjourned. At the adjourned meeting, the plan of the committee was accepted, and they were authorized to sell the pews at public vendue to the highest bidder, and apply the proceeds to the further finishing of the house; and as it might be necessary to give the committee further instructions, the meeting adjourned to the 13th of October. At this meeting the pews were sold, and the stuff and material for finishing the house "vendued" to the following persons, they being the lowest bidders, namely,—to Josiah Crosby, jr., 2 M laths at 7s. each, and 1 M feet merchantable boards at 18s.; Augustus Blanchard, 2 hhds. lime at 24s. 6d. each; Joseph Wallace, 2 M laths at 7s. each; Stephen Crosby, 3 M laths at 7s.,

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him, promising to perform sentinel's duty in his absence. To the great amusement of his neighbors he gravely marched before his own door with musket on his shoulder till his keeper returned, and when inquired of in relation to his occupation, said he was guarding Mather Byles. After his trial, in alluding to the fact that he had been put under guard, the guard removed, and then again replaced, he observed that he had been guarded, re-guarded and disregarded. In 1780, on the celebrated dark day, a lady who resided near the doctor sent her young son to him to know if he could account for the uncommon appearance. His reply was, "Give my compliments to your mamma, and tell her I am as much in the dark as she is."

1 M feet boards at 18s., and 2 hhds. lime at 24s. each; Isaac Abbott, 2 M laths at 7s. each, 3 hhds. lime at 24s.; Andrew Bradford, jr., 1 M laths, 7s.; Caleb Jones, 1 M feet  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. white pine boards, 1 M feet inch do.—do. clear stuff for the work intended; Daniel Johnson, 1 M feet merchantable boards, 18s.; Josiah Osgood, 1 M do., 18s., 2 corner girths, 12 by 14 inches; Joshua Crosby, one half M white pine boards for ceiling, 9s.; Jacob Hale, 500 feet pine plank 2 in. thick 14 in. wide, 16s.; 100 feet pine plank, 3 in. thick, 14 in. wide, at 4s.; 400 slitwork, 3 by 4 in., at 8s., and hhd. lime, 25s.; hewed white pine timber, 6 by 7 in., suitable length for the gallery breast-work, sills for the seats and studs at 8s. 6d.; Thomas Burns, 2 hhds. lime, 25s. each.

In December the parish voted to agree with Mr. Thurston or some other minister to preach six months during the year next ensuing.

At the annual meeting, in 1789, it was voted to raise £36 to pay for preaching and defray parish expenses; that twelve feet in the front of the gallery be appropriated for a pew for the singers; that ten pounds be laid out in work round the meeting-house, and that John Burns, Caleb Jones, and Benjamin Conant be a committee to see the work done. In October it was voted to enlarge the singers' pew, and that it be seventeen feet, and no longer." At the annual meeting, the next year, it was voted to build and sell two pews of six feet front each, at each end of the singers' pew in the gallery, and that the pews be built at the expense of the parish.

In January, 1791, at a special meeting, the question of having the parish set off by lines was agitated, and a committee was appointed to treat with the first parish for the following lines, viz.,—"Begin at the north-east corner of Ebenezer Averill's land, and running southerly, including Andrew and John Bradford's intact, William Peabody's, the widow Shepard, Jotham and Daniel Shepard and John Shepard, Esq., until it comes to Souhegan river, then down said river to Merrimack west line, including all belonging to Amherst, on the south side of said river." At the annual meeting this year, it was voted to raise £40 to pay for preaching, and to defray parish expenses; but there was nothing in the warrant relative to the parish being

"set off by lines." In June, however, a special meeting was called; when not only the question of the parish being set off by lines was agitated, but the question of being set off as a separate town was considered, and it was voted to petition the General Court, as soon as may be, to be set off by lines or a separate town; and a committee, consisting of Joshua Burnham, Josiah Crosby, Augustus Blanchard, Thomas Burns, and Porter Lummus, were appointed for that purpose, and £12 appropriated to pay their expenses.\*

At the annual meeting, in 1792, it was voted to raise £60 to pay for preaching, and defray parish expenses, and in June, of this year, the parish was incorporated, by the name of the southwest parish, in Amherst, and boundaries fixed thereto. In October, it was voted to sell the remaining pews at public vendue, apply the money arising from such sale to the painting and further finishing the meeting-house, and a committee was appointed to give a title to the pews sold. At the annual meeting, the next year, the parish voted to raise £55 to pay for preaching, and to defray parish expenses, and that the funds of former collectors be applied "to the further finishing and painting the meeting-house."

Thus we see that it took upwards of ten years of continuous struggle for the parishioners to complete their house of worship, —a struggle that we of to-day can scarcely comprehend. Nearly forty years since, a venerable man then living, one of the founders of the church and an active worker in this enterprise, was asked by the speaker what year the meeting-house was completed, to which he replied, "We scarcely knew when it was completed ourselves, for at no time during the work did we have any clear conception of what would constitute a finished house. We worshipped in Col. Shepard's barn,† and when the meeting-

\*The parish not only took this step to be set off, but in October, 1792, voted to petition the General Court in connection with the mile slip, Duxbury school farm, and a part of Hollis, to be set off as a separate town, and in Jan., 1794, these several parcels of territory were made a separate town, and incorporated by the name of Milford.

† To us, worshipping in the comfortable if not luxurious houses of to-day, holding a meeting in a barn seems an absurdity,—yet an inquiry into the practices of the early settlers shows that this was no uncommon thing; and a sermon preached in the barn of Major Cole, of Mont Vernon, by Rev. Mr. Coggin, of Chelmsford, Mass., upon the importance of building a meeting-house in that parish, was an effective instrumentality in accomplishing that work.

house was so far finished that we could hold meetings in it, we thought we had accomplished a great work. We were poor, our means necessarily limited, frequently divided in council, and nothing but the privilege, for ourselves and our children, of worshipping God in his sanctuary could have held us together and induced us to complete the work." Truly was it said yesterday, in the excellent historical discourse to which most of us listened, "people do not move into the forests, clear for themselves homesteads in the solitudes of the wilderness, and take on themselves the burden of building meeting-houses and sustaining ministers, without deep convictions of the value of the gospel."

#### CHURCH ORGANIZED.

The church in this parish, denominated the third church in Amherst, was organized by an ecclesiastical council, Nov. 19, 1788.\* The council consisted of Jonathan Livermore,† Abiel Fiske,‡ John Bruce,§ Moses Putnam, Ebenezer Rockwood, Richard Ward, Daniel Mansfield, and William Bradford.

In the proceedings of the council twelve persons are named as constituting the church, viz.:

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\* The churches organized in Hillsborough county, previous to the commencement of the present century, are as follows:—

Organized.		Organized.	Organized.
Nashua,	1685	Wilton,	1763
Hudson,	1737	Hillsborough,	1769
Amherst,	1741	Goffstown,	1771
Litchfield,	1741	Temple,	1771
Hollis,	1743	Merrimack,	1772
Pelham,	1751	Mason,	1772
Lyndeborough,	1757	Francesstown,	1773
New Ipswich,	1761	Mont Vernon,	1780
		Hancock,	1788
		Milford,	1788
		Weare,	1789
		Deering,	1789
		Greenfield,	1791
		Brookline,	1796
		Peterborough,	1799

† Rev. Jonathan Livermore, a native of Northborough, Worcester county, Mass., born in 1739, was graduated at Harvard college in 1760; was the first minister of Wilton, being ordained there in 1763. He sustained the pastoral relation in that place about fifteen years, when he was dismissed, but did not leave town, remaining till his death, which occurred July 20, 1809, aged 70 years.

‡ Rev. Abel Fiske was born at Pepperell, Mass., May 28, 1752; was graduated at Harvard college in 1774; taught the Grammar school, and studied divinity at Concord, Mass.; was ordained at Wilton in November, 1778, and was pastor of the church till his death, which took place April 21, 1802, at the age of 50 years.

§ Rev. John Bruce, the first minister in Mont Vernon, was born at Marlborough, Mass., in 1757; entered Dartmouth college at the age of about twenty years; was graduated in 1781; was settled in 1785, and continued his pastorate till his death, which occurred March 12, 1809.

Stephen Burnham,	Thomas Burns,
Caleb Jones,	Jonathan Towne,
Elisha Hutchinson,	Benjamin Conant,
John Wallace,	Benjamin Hutchinson,
Joseph Wallace,	William Melendy,
Nathan Hutchinson,	Jonathan Jones.

Attached to the covenant are seven additional names, viz.:

James Wallace,	Letitia Wallace,
Hannah Bradford,	Mary Wallace,
Mary Burnham,	Betsy Wallace.
Sarah Hutchinson,	

The first meeting was held at the house of William Crosby \* soon after the organization, when Elisha Hutchinson was chosen Clerk, which office he held till his death.† At this meeting an examining committee was chosen, and it was decided that applicants for admission might relate their religious experience verbally or in writing, and that no persons should be admitted who would not come up to the standard of full communion. The next year several meetings were held, but they related solely to the discipline of a member. Then follows a period of nearly six years in which no meeting seems to have been held, at the expiration of which time the church and town concurred in giving "Mr. Kiah Bailey" a call, the vote in the joint body being forty-nine for, and thirty against. Subsequently, the

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\* William Crosby, the benefactor of the parish,—whose house seems to have been open for parish, church, and other meetings, whenever business vital to the welfare of the body politic was to be considered,—was a descendant of Simon Crosby, aged 26 years, who, with his wife Ann, aged 25 years, and their son Thomas, aged 5 weeks, and came to this country in the ship Susan and Ellen in 1635 ("Founders of New England," page 22), settled in Cambridge, near where Harvard college is now located, and was the son of Josiah and Sarah (Fitch) Crosby, who came here from Billerica in 1753, and located on the opposite side of the road near where the late Frederic Crosby lived. He was born Jan. 29, 1758; married Sarah, daughter of John Shepard; and died esteemed and respected, May 12, 1831, aged 73 years. His younger brother Asa, who was born July 15, 1765, and who died at Hanover, April 12, 1836, was the father of Hon. Nathan Crosby of Lowell, Dr. Josiah Crosby of Manchester, the late Dr. Dixie Crosby of Hanover, Prof. Alpheus Crosby of Salem, and the late Prof. Thomas Russell Crosby of Hanover.

† Elisha Hutchinson, grandfather of the famous "Hutchinson family" of vocalists, was the son of Joseph and Hannah (Richardson) Hutchinson; was born at Middleton, Essex county, Mass., Dec. 6, 1751; married Sarah, daughter of Amos and Mary Buxton of Danvers; settled here, in 1779, on the farm, in the north part of the town, now in possession of Dodge G. Hartshorn, and died Oct. 12, 1809, aged 49 years.

town non-concurred in the movement. The next year, 1796, the church and the town concurred in giving Mr. Phineas Randall a call to settle with them in the work of the ministry, but Mr. Randall did not accept. Then follows a period of nearly two years, when no meeting was held, after which Rev. Abel Fiske, of Wilton, was elected Standing Moderator, and a committee chosen to give information to the members whenever a church meeting should be appointed by the moderator. About this time the town voted, seventy-six to thirty-one, to give Mr. Nath'l H. Fletcher\* a call, but the church did not concur. At this time the church had been organized nearly ten years, but its existence must have been merely nominal. It could only have lived in name, as no deacons had been chosen, nor members admitted either by letter or by the profession of their faith, and there is no record indicating that a communion season had been observed. In March, 1798, the question of receiving members by letters from other churches was considered, and in April it was decided in the affirmative, and nineteen members were thus received, five being from the church in Amherst, two from the second church in Amherst, six from the church in Wilton, three from the church in Billerica, two from the church in Dracont, and one from the church in Durham. It was also voted at the same meeting to have the sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered twice during the coming season, and two persons were appointed to wait on the table. Two additional persons were also chosen for the purpose of conversing with those who should apply for admission, and the moderator was instructed to call a meeting at any time, at the request of any seven members. In August, 1799, a meeting was held to consider the question of giving Mr. Micah Stone a call, but it

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\* Nathaniel Hill Fletcher, son of Deacon Abel and Abigail (Hildreth) Fletcher, was born at Boxborough, Middlesex county, Mass., April 16, 1769; was graduated at Harvard University in 1793; received the honorary degree of A. M. at Brown University in 1799; was settled at Wells, Me., in 1800; was married February 8, 1801, to Sarah, daughter of John Storer, of the same place; and, after a ministry of 27 years, resigned his pastorate and returned to Boxborough, where he died Sept. 4, 1834. Several of his sermons were published, among which was one delivered at Deerfield, in this state, in 1812, at the ordination of Rev. Nathaniel Wells; a Thanksgiving sermon, delivered in Massachusetts, in November of the same year; one delivered at the funeral of Rev. Paul Coffin, D. D., of Buxton, Me., June 8, 1821; and one on Christian communion, in 1827.



was regarded as inexpedient. In the year 1800 the church, fifteen of the nineteen members present, voted to invite Mr. Thomas Beede to become their pastor, and the town concurred, proposing \$566 as a settlement to be paid within one year after the ordination, an annual salary of \$233 while he supplied the desk, and \$110 annually during his residence in town, after he should be unable to supply the desk; and the next year a unanimous call of the church was extended to Mr. Joshua Lane. It would be interesting at the present time to know what were the hindrances to the settlement of the various candidates, and how the matter in each case was treated by the parties in interest; but the records are silent on the subject.

In March, 1802, the church, nineteen members being present, invited Rev. Humphrey Moore to settle with them in the gospel ministry. The town concurred, in April, and chose a committee of fifteen to determine what settlement and salary was proper to offer Mr. Moore for his services in the ministry. This committee, after the consideration of the matter for one hour, reported \$600 as a settlement to be paid, or to become due in one year after the ordination, \$400 as an annual salary, and a gratuity of \$100 per annum while he should remain their minister, and be unable, through infirmity or old age, to supply the desk. In August, Mr. Moore gave an answer in the affirmative, and on the 13th day of the following October he was ordained, the exercises on the occasion being,—

1. Anthem.
2. Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Ebenezer Hill, of Mason.
3. Sermon, Luke ix, 60, by Rev. Elijah Dunbar, of Peterboro'.
4. Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Jacob Burnap, of Merrimack.
5. Charge, by Rev. Jeremiah Barnard, of Amherst.
6. Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Lemuel Wadsworth, of Brookline.
7. Benediction by the pastor.

With the settlement of the new pastor, a brighter day dawned upon the church. The month following, a confession of faith was adopted, deacons chosen,\* and stated communion seasons

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\* Moses Towne and Benjamin French were chosen, neither of whom accepted, and at the next meeting, holden in May, 1802, John Wallace and William Lovejoy were chosen, and entered upon their duties.

agreed upon; steps indicating faithful, earnest work. At the time of the ordination, the church had been in existence about fourteen years, but had had no additions except on one occasion, and then by letter. The subsequent year witnessed the membership doubled, thirty-two being added on profession of their faith, and seven by letters from other churches.

Of the pastorate of Mr. Moore, extending over a third part of a century, I need not speak.\* It is in part if not in whole within the memory of many present. The 335 additions to the church during his ministry testify to the diligence and faithfulness of his labors, and are evidence of consecration to his chosen work. And in conclusion, let me add that, in what I have said to-day, I have endeavored to let the fathers speak in their own language, revealing their characters in their own words, supplying no motives, and purposely abstaining from comments, that we might, unprejudiced, commend what was commendable and noble in their lives; and if, amid their trials, their sufferings, and sacrifices, we discovered mistakes in method, what was little in character, or want of devout affection for one another, it might be earnestly deplored, and avoided in our own experience.

\* Rev. Humphrey Moore was dismissed March 9, 1836; remained in the parish, and died April 8, 1871, in the 93d year of his age. The following named pastors have succeeded him:—

REV. J. W. SALTER was installed April 27, 1836; dismissed Oct. 24, 1838.

REV. ABNER B. WARNER was ordained Feb. 6, 1839; dismissed Oct. 27, 1846.

REV. LYCURGUS P. KIMBALL was installed May 19, 1847; dismissed Aug. 7, 1849.

REV. E. N. HIDDEN was installed Nov. 21, 1849; dismissed April 7, 1858.

REV. S. C. KENDALL was installed April 7, 1858; dismissed Oct. 15, 1860.

REV. F. D. AYER was ordained May 1, 1861; dismissed Sept. 8, 1867.

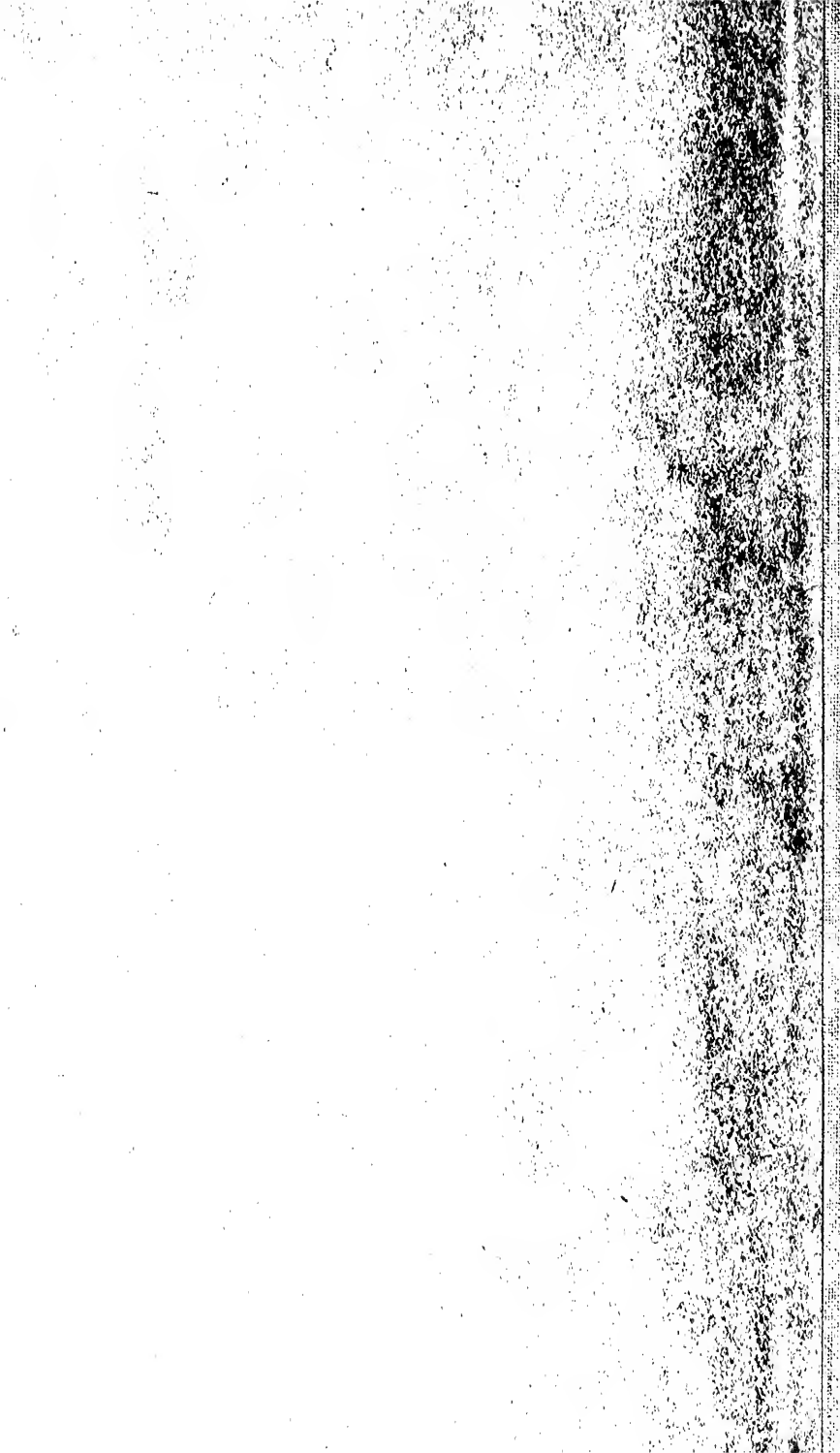
REV. GEO. E. FREEMAN was installed Dec. 23, 1868; dismissed Dec. 14, 1871.

REV. GEORGE PIERCE, JR., was installed Oct. 29, 1872.









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